

Listing of Claims:

1- 4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) A biopsy needle assembly comprising:

an introducer shaft having a first and second end, and sized for percutaneous insertion into a patient along an insertion path to locate the first end at a biopsy site;
~~the first end having an electrically conductive surface adapted to be exposed to tissue and communicating by means of an insulated conductor to the second end to connect with a radio frequency cauterizing electrical source;~~

a large area electrode adapted to contact the patient without production of cauterizing temperatures; ~~to complete a circuit through the radio frequency cauterizing electrical source with the electrically conductive surface of the introducer shaft through a patient; and~~

a biopsy needle interfitting with the introducer shaft to be guided thereby, the biopsy needle including a sampling means for removal of a tissue sample ~~before cauterization of the insertion path using the electrically conductive surface; and~~

~~wherein the electrically conductive surface is a conductive stylet having a first end supported in~~ by the introducer shaft;

wherein the conductive stylet includes an electrically conductive surface a portion of which is adapted to be exposed to tissue in the patient, the electrically conductive surface being coupled through an insulated conductor to a radio frequency cauterizing electrical source, such that the electrically conductive surface completes a radio frequency cauterizing circuit with the ground pad to cauterize the insertion path of the introducer shaft.

6. (Previously Presented) The biopsy needle assembly of claim 5 wherein the conductive stylet has a rounded tip.

7. (Previously Presented) The biopsy needle assembly of claim 5 wherein the introducer shaft is a hollow tube and wherein the insulated conductor is provided by a portion of the conductive stylet fitting within the hollow tube.

8. (Original) The biopsy needle assembly of claim 5 wherein a shaft portion of the conductive stylet includes an outer insulating covering to provide the insulated conductor.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) A biopsy needle assembly comprising:
an introducer shaft having a first and second end, and sized for percutaneous insertion into a patient along an insertion path to locate the first end at a biopsy site, the first end having an electrically conductive surface adapted to be exposed to tissue and communicating by means of an insulated conductor to the second end to connect with a radio frequency cauterizing electrical source;

a large area electrode adapted to contact the patient without production of cauterizing temperatures to complete a circuit through the radio frequency cauterizing electrical source with the electrically conductive surface of the introducer shaft through a patient; and

a biopsy needle interfitting with the introducer shaft to be guided thereby, the biopsy needle including a sampling means for removal of a tissue sample before cauterization of the insertion path using the electrically conductive surface;

further including a temperature sensor positioned at the electrically conductive surface.

11 - 20. (Canceled)